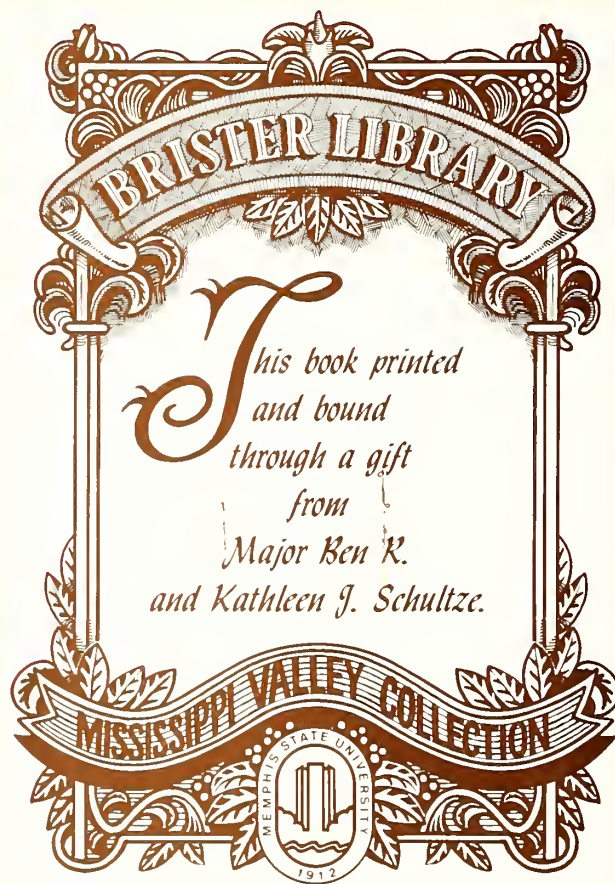


LIFE OF CLARENCE SAUNDERS  
INTERVIEW WITH  
ERSELL "RED" CAVETTE

BY - MICHAEL FREEMAN  
ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE  
MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY





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LIFE OF CLARENCE SAUNDERS

INTERVIEW WITH ERSSELL "RED" CAVETTE

FEBRUARY 23, 1984

BY

MICHAEL FREEMAN

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE

MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY





CAVETTE  
(Clarence Sound  
Project)

MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE

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PLACE 256 S. Greer  
DATE 9/18/84

E. D. Caddette

(INTERVIEWEE)

Mike Freeman  
Freeman

(For the Mississippi Valley Archives  
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THIS IS A MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE PROJECT, "THE LIFE OF CLARENCE SAUNDERS." THE INTERVIEW IS WITH ERSSELL "RED" CAVETTE. THE SUBJECT OF THE INTERVIEW IS "CLARENCE SAUNDERS AND PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL." THE DATE IS FEBRUARY 23, 1984. THE PLACE IS 256 GREER. THE INTERVIEW IS BY MIKE FREEMAN.

Mr. Freeman: When did you meet Clarence Saunders?

Mr. Cavette: I worked for him when I was in high school, he had stores here, on Friday afternoons and Saturdays. I lived in South Memphis then. I got to know him real good when I started playing for him. He went to every practice.

Mr. Freeman: Did he . . . was this the pro (football) team?

Mr. Cavette: He went to every one.

Mr. Freeman: Did he have the team over for parties?

Mr. Cavette: Once in a great while. If we won a game he would get us up to the picture show at the Orpheum Theater. One time he had us out to practice at his house out here (he) had a big fine home and tennis courts and we wore football shoes and practiced on his tennis court. Oh, we ate there one night, had steaks and all that, and we just tore those courts apart, tore them up. He didn't care; he had them fixed up.

Mr. Freeman: He had a lot of money then.

Mr. Cavette: He had a golf course out there.





Mr. Freeman: Was this way out East?

Mr. Cavette: No, I guess not. It wasn't too far out.

Mr. Freeman: I was thinking of the Lichterman House (Park and Ridgeway).

Mr. Cavette: No, I believe it was on Central. See, that used to be way out. The city limits used to be on Parkway.

I officiated Southeast Conference (football).

Mr. Freeman: I heard once you were a body guard for Clarence Saunders.

Mr. Cavette: No, I never was a body guard. I never even knew he had a body guard. (Long pause while he searches through his scrapbook.)

Mr. Freeman: Ya'll traveled?

Mr. Cavette: We played most our games here. (He looks at a sports program I picked up.) Let me see what this is here, "The Atlanta Braves, 1933." We went down there and played them on a Saturday. We came back here and played the Brooklyn Dodgers, or something, an old team out of the NFL, the next day. (He mumbles to himself again while reading the sports program.)

Mr. Freeman: Ya'll traveled.

Mr. Cavette: We played in Nashville, we went to Atlanta, we went to St. Louis any number of times. There was the American Football League. And there was Memphis, Charlotte, Louisville, St. Louis, Tulsa, and Dallas. Of course you played each team twice, once at home and once on the road. Now see, at that day,



at that time, Tom Watkins owned the old Memphis Chicks baseball club, but he owned us at the time, and we played in Russwood Park.

Mr. Freeman: Did ya'll travel well and stay in good hotels?

Mr. Cavette: Oh yes. We traveled on the pullmans.

Mr. Freeman: Did ya'll get paid well?

Mr. Cavette: Yes, for those days and times, we got paid good.

That was during the Depression days, '29, '30, '31, '32.

Mr. Freeman: What did ya'll get paid a year?

Mr. Cavette: I never did know what anybody made. I made 75 to 100, 90 dollars a game. That was pretty good money for those days.

Mr. Freeman: Did Saunders travel with the team?

Mr. Cavette: No, when Saunders had it we didn't travel much. We played most of our games in Memphis. See, in those days there was an odd number of teams in the NFL. In those days they could go anywheres and play if they didn't have a game. At the end of the year they would go and barnstorm. In 1929 we played the Green Bay Packers the Sunday after they won the NFL championship, and we beat them. The following Sunday we beat the Chicago Bears; then, they had Red Grange. We had a good ballclub.

Mr. Freeman: Teams like the Packers and Bears would travel around the country.

Mr. Cavette: Well, see, on off Saturdays, they would travel around. That went on for several years. We played the Boston Braves, who is now the Los Angeles Rams right now. Back in those days they had a terrific football team. We played them two straight





Sundays one year. We played them on solid ice one game and, of course, nobody came for the game. Then we played them next week. Now, Saunders wasn't involved that year. I can't think what year that was. I believe it was in '32. Now here's a picture and anecdote about the game. (He points to scrapbook.)

Mr. Freeman: Did Lee Saunders play football?

Mr. Cavette: He played with us in 1929 a little bit. He wasn't very . . . he wasn't very big, and he broke his leg early in the season. He played, and he asked no quarter from us. (He points to scrapbook.) Now this is about me, the captain of the Tigers. That was in 1929. Here's a picture I was telling you about.

Mr. Freeman: That's Clarence Saunders' Tigers.

Mr. Cavette: (Reading from clipping), "Saunders' Tigers in victory over Louisville in mud seven to nothing."

Mr. Freeman: What day was that?

Mr. Cavette: Oh mercy, I forgot. Let me see if I can find it. That was in 1929. Saunders' parties for us were after this (game) that I was telling you about. That was the Saturday (or) the Sunday before we played the Bears. We played the Bears twice in 1929. Let me see if there is a date on it.

Mr. Freeman: What about Saunders' other son, did he not play football, Clay?

Mr. Cavette: Naw. Lee was one of the finest guys I ever knew. He started that day, I guess, against Louisville. Pouring down rain. We beat them 7 to 0 way late in the fourth quarter.

Mr. Freeman: You knew Lee Saunders quite well.



Mr. Cavette: Yea, saw him for years.

Mr. Freeman: Why didn't Clarence Saunders join the NFL? Did he have a chance to?

Mr. Cavette: I don't know. I think if he had not gone broke he would have gone to the NFL. He went broke in 1932. (He points to a scrapbook again.) Here's a bunch of Indians, a team we played.

Mr. Freeman: There were teams all over the country.

Mr. Cavette: Here's the Chicago team we played out in Mills Stadium in Chicago.

Mr. Freeman: The Chicago Bears?

Mr. Cavette: No, that's just the Mills Stadium (team). They weren't even in the NFL. They had a good independent team. This is in 1929. There's a team we played in 1929. (He is pointing to another clipping.) We beat the heck out of them. We beat them 64 to nothing. We played the Cleveland Panthers in '29. See (he reads from a clipping), "5000 see local independent team beat Cleveland Panthers." (He points to a picture.) Bucky Moore. That's one of the finest running backs. He played at Loyola University in New Orleans.

Mr. Freeman: How would he get together a team like this. How would Saunders get his players?

Mr. Cavette: Early Maxwell was the general manager, and he was a sports writer for the Commercial Appeal here. And he could get players anywhere. For instance, this team here . . . (pause). Here is Austin Applewhite, a great player from Ole Miss; Tiny Provily, a great player from Loyola of New Orleans, where Bucky Moore played. Cliff Norvell played high school here, he was a guard.





He just died (Fall 1983). I told you about him. Larry Bettencourt, an All-American from St. Mary's. Chris Arnoudt played here. Duke Kimball was an All-American back in the days when Sewanee had great football teams. Miller was, I don't know, an end. Farnsworth was a fine football player for Southwestern when they had good football teams. Tiny Knee was one of the finest football players to play in this area. I don't know who the substitutes were because we had a lot of them. The last two games of 1929, when we beat Green Bay and the (Chicago) Bears, our backfield was Bucky Moore, one of the finest runners I ever saw; an All American fullback from Georgia Tech . . . (pause); Ken Strong, he played in the NFL and with us. Those players used to come down here when their season was over with. And we had 39, well 38 not counting me, of the finest football players you will see. Had All-Americans . . . That was one of the best squads we ever had, the last two, three games of 1929.

Mr. Freeman:        Would players go from team to team?

Mr. Cavette:        Maybe off season they would. We picked up a boy from St. Louis one year, 1934, when they had the NFL team, but he never did play for the St. Louis team. He was from St. Louis, one of the greatest athletes they ever had up there. Saunders would get them . . . Red Scheider, he's dead now, played for us. (He points to another clipping.) Here is where we, the Tigers, win over Louisville 12 to 4. The date is December 12, but I don't know what year. This Moore here is from Arkansas, Vdowich from Michigan, Tesse Eberdt from Alabama, Blankenbaker from Ole Miss; Kimbrough



from Sewanee, Applewhite from Ole Miss, Beavers from Arkansas, Shelton from Oklahoma, Marks from Indiana. We had a good football club.

Mr. Freeman: Did Saunders make money off these football teams?

Mr. Cavette: Well, he made some mistakes. He bet so much money . . . he made money from betting.

Mr. Freeman: He bet money on these games?

Mr. Cavette: I never did know this. That's what everybody said. But he made a mistake, and I tried to tell him so. He had an open account at a sporting goods store, and people, players go there and get shoes, anything. He had an open account up there. And he didn't do too good that way.

(He reads from a clipping.) "Sole Owner." We went to Nashville and got beat up there. Now, this was in '28. I hurt my knee up there that day. That's when I first hurt my left knee, at that damn ball game.

One of the greatest football players who ever played was Bill White. He played at Oklahoma. (He) came in here and played with the <sup>UT</sup> ~~VT~~ Doctors. You have heard of the old ~~VT~~ <sup>UT</sup> Doctors (University of Tennessee Medical School) team.

Mr. Freeman: I have heard of them.

Mr. Cavette: He played for us in 1928. Now, that is a football player for Ole Miss (he points to a photograph), Solly Cohen. Daine's a good one. Trelarney's a good one. Alhood, Atkins, all those were good ones. Now, (Cliff) Norvell didn't play for us that year.





(He reads from a clipping.) "Red Cavette is a Casualty." I separated my shoulder on Monday during practice. I played the whole ball game that Sunday.

Mr. Freeman: With your shoulder hurt?

Mr. Cavette: Yea, I was crazy. (He points to another clipping.) Now, here's one where we beat a team from Cairo, Illinois. No, this was in 1927, no, '28, because White and Knee were playing. I can tell the years (of clippings) by some of the players.

Mr. Freeman: (Looking at a clipping.) That's his (Saunders') name on the jerseys.

Mr. Cavette: Back then, we didn't have numbers. (He reads a clipping about his transfer to Chicago.)

I didn't go to Chicago. I was transferred there, but I didn't go (he worked for the Illinois Central Railroad). I'll tell you why I didn't go. I went to tell Mr. Saunders good-bye, he had a store on Main, just off Jefferson, (a Solē Owner store), and he said to me, "You got any money?" I said, "Yea." He had already broken ground on a five-story building on Cleveland, near Crosstown. He said, "On the third floor I'm going to have sporting goods. If you stay here, I will set you up in the store. You can play baseball in the summer, basketball. You can have a football team." And he said, "I'll get you a job up there, and you can play all you want to." Hell, I quit. I told them (IC Railroad) I wasn't going to



Chicago. This was in 1932, right in the middle of the Depression. Of course, he (Saunders) went broke just a month or two later. His own man sold him out; if not, he could have taken over Wall Street. That's how the story goes. But his own man sold him out.

Mr. Freeman: You didn't know much about Wall Street?

Mr. Cavette: Well, I didn't know the details about him on Wall Street and going broke. I just always heard his own man sold him out.

Mr. Freeman: So he never did build that store in 1932.

Mr. Cavette: Naw. He had just broke the ground.

Now, you would be surprised. (He holds a picture of a football team and points to each player.) He's dead, he's dead, he's dead, he's had a stroke, he's dead; now, this is a team back in 1934-35. So many of these people are dead.

Here's an IC basketball team I played on. I worked for the IC (again he points to each player, saying "He's dead.")

Mr. Freeman: Illinois Central Railroad?

Mr. Cavette: I worked for the depot at the station for years. I worked for the railroad 22 years. I quit there in 1945 or 47.

Mr. Freeman: Did you live in Chicago at the time?

Mr. Cavette: No, I never lived in Chicago. I worked in Memphis all the time.

Mr. Freeman: (Looking at basketball photo.) You only played with five guys.



Mr. Cavette:        Yea. We got them from the office. We had seven on the team.

Mr. Freeman:        You must have been tired after a game.

Mr. Cavette:        Naw. See, I went from basketball to baseball to football year after year from 1923 to 1935. I didn't weigh over 168 pounds. I drank buttermilk, did everything in the world to gain weight. My dad said, "There is no way you can gain weight. You will have to settle down and quit one of your sports. Then you can gain weight."

                    That's all I got. I lost a lot of things from my pro games (clippings). And I'll tell you what, I didn't keep some of it. Well, I never thought about it in those days. I was young in 1929. I was born in 1905. I was 24 years old and not married, and a lot of that stuff. I was going with the girl that I married, but, at the time, I didn't think about it . . .

Mr. Freeman:        Didn't think about keeping that stuff?

Mr. Cavette:        Naw. I never kept any of this high school stuff. Some of that she kept because I was going with her in high school. She'd cut out (clippings) and, of course, after we got married . . . Now, here is something about Early Maxwell, he was our general manager. Here is a picture of him with Lee Saunders (a clipping dated 1958). There was a reunion of the Memphis Tigers at Hodges Field. They used to have a prep All-American football game here. (Pointing at clipping) There's Hugh Magnevey, he coached our 1929 team. There's Cliff Norvell.

Mr. Freeman:        Is this you?





Mr. Cavette: Yes.

Mr. Freeman: So you knew Saunders long after the football years were over with.

Mr. Cavette: Yes, I went to his funeral. The funeral was at this church right over here on Greer. (Central and Greer.)

Mr. Freeman: Ya'll used to socialize together.

Mr. Cavette: No, I just knew (him). To me he was a great guy. (He) was awfully good to me.

#### SIDE TWO

(Mr. Cavette is searching through clippings, talking to himself.)

Mr. Freeman: Did you know any of the other Saunders people that well?

Mr. Cavette: Well, I knew Lee and Mr. Saunders pretty good, but I didn't know the others that well.

Mr. Freeman: What was Saunders like during the games?

Mr. Cavette: I don't know. I was playing. He would sit right behind the bench, him and Mr. Crump. Mr. Crump was at every game we ever played out there. The only time Saunders came into it (the football team) was in 1929. We was playing, early in the season, and we wasn't doing too good. At halftime, he walked into the dressing room, and he read the riot act. I never will forget, there was a player named Wilson, from LSU, who was a little out of shape, but a great player. He (Saunders) said, "Everybody get into this room." And Wilson was setting at



the door. He said, "I can hear you." He (Saunders) said, "Wilson, you get into this room or take your uniform off and go back to Baton Rouge." I tell you what, as long as you did what he . . . he liked everybody and treated them fine. He would have made a great asset to the NFL. He had a lot going for him.

Mr. Freeman: Well, did him and Mr. Crump sit together during the games?

Mr. Cavette: They sat close together, right behind the bench in the box seats. I don't know how familiar they were with each other, how well they got along.

Mr. Freeman: Did Mr. Saunders go to these out of town games?

Mr. Cavette: I don't remember. 1929 was his big year with us. He sponsored us in '28, but he wasn't involved that much, he just went to the games. In 29, we played Nashville once, and he didn't go to that game. Actually, that was one of the first, early games of the season. Hot as heck. But he hadn't really got involved in it yet. But he came involved. We practiced mostly at night. He came out and tried to catch those punts in 200, 300 dollar suits. Of course, that was a fine suit in those days..

Mr. Freeman: He tried to catch punts?

Mr. Cavette: Oh yea, he was a down to earth guy. And he seemed real active always thirty to forty minutes. See, then, he went back right quick, straight for the pressmen (reporters).



Saunders told Early Maxwell one time . . . he'd make suggestions to the coach, "Might be good if we didn't start Red, and then put him in and let him score. He always scored when he's in there." And he, Saunders, said, "Why don't we do that?" So Early came to me, Early and I were this close (he holds two fingers together). I said, "I'm the captain of this team. If I am good enough to play, goddamit, then, I want to start. You can tell Mr. Saunders I don't like that." Then, I said, "Starting the game is something. You can see the greater battle if you start." So he went back to Mr. Saunders, and I never heard anymore about it.

He is the only man I ever knew . . . we were playing the Oklahoma Indians one time in 1929. He had told them not to start the game until everybody was in the park. Well, in those days, you didn't have any advanced sales. The only advertising you would get, you would go up and down Main Street, and you would put up posters on the windows of businesses on (along) the street. Of course, newspapers were popular, but radio wasn't used, oh no, not at all. So Saunders told them, "I don't want the kickoff till everyone was on the field (in the stadium)." They were lined up from old Hodges Field out there where the VA Hospital is on Jefferson. They would be lined up to Waldran, to Poplar on down to Pauline. There were just two old ladies selling tickets, tickets were just like you would get at a theater.





We kicked off at 2:00. We were playing the Indians, and I had recovered a fumble on the fifty yard line, and we were (now) down on their fifteen yard line. And they had a good ball club. We looked up, and he (Saunders) came running across the football field with Early Maxwell right behind him.

Mr. Freeman:           Saunders?

Mr. Cavette:           Yes, Willis McCabe was the referee. "Willis," he said, "I told you not to start this game till everybody was in it. There are a lot of people still waiting to get in. A good football game is seeing the kickoff; that's a big part of it." And McCabe told him, "Mr. Saunders, no one told me anything about this, and we kick off at 2:00 every Sunday." He (Saunders) said, "Well, we are going to kick off again. McCabe said, "We can't do it."

(Saunders)           "Why?"

(McCabe)            "Well, the rules say  
we can't do that."

(Saunders)           And he said, "I am the damn rules of this Football game." We sat there fifteen minutes while everybody got into the stadium.

Mr. Freeman:           What did the other team say?

Mr. Cavette:           They were tickled to death. We were about to score.

Mr. Freeman:           Oh, I see (laughs).



Mr. Cavette: We finally beat them 12 to 7. There was a big letdown, sitting there for fifteen minutes after we had them on the ten or fifteen yard line. Sure, they were tickled to death. It's only a game, I guess . . . history, where you had two opening game kickoffs fifteen minutes a part.

There was a lot of enthusiastic people who got involved in those games. They looked forward to them, they came from all over Mississippi, Arkansas, West Tennessee to see those games.

Mr. Freeman: Was there a lot of betting?

Mr. Cavette: I imagine so, there has always been a lot of betting in football or anything else.

And I worked for the IC railroad at their Central Station. I had permission from the railroad to get off and practice any time, as long as the two teams came into town on the IC railroad. As long as the team that came into Memphis arrived on the IC, or if we traveled, they got our business. When we were playing Louisville, during that mud game I told you about, our office got a call from the passenger office in Louisville asking why the team wasn't traveling on the Illinois Central. So the office manager called me and asked, "What's the deal?"

Mr. Saunders' office is, you know where the Central Station is now, well, there is Calhoun Street and then a viaduct that runs to Front Street back there. That is where



his (Saunders) office was back at the time. So I went over there. And you go over there to his office, and there'd be 15, 20, 25 salesmen trying to get in there and see him, selling him stuff. And I walked in there and the gal outside the office, who took the phone calls, the PX system, or whatever, said, "Red, what do you want?" I said, "I got to see Mr. Saunders, it's real important." She plugged in there (Saunders' office) and out come three salesmen. I walked in there and some guy said, "Who the hell does he think he is, goddamn, I've been waiting here hours to get in there." She said, "He is the football captain."

So I went in there, and I said, "We're in trouble." He said, "Why?" I said, "Well, the Louisville team is coming in on the L and N, and you know what our agreement was." So he picked the phone up and called the general manager of that team.

Mr. Freeman: Oh yea?

Mr. Cavette: And he said, "Why are you coming L and N?" They said, "Because one of the officials of our club is one of the passenger agents of the L and N railroad." Mr. Saunders could get tough. He said, "I don't give a damn, the captain of my team works for the Illinois Central Railroad." He said, "I'm sorry, Mr. Saunders, but we have already bought tickets on L and N." Saunders said, "I'll tell you what I will do. You come, and I will pick up the money for your tickets. You come IC, or you stay home, and I will have a free scrimmage with my





squad, free to the public. Now, make up your mind what you want to do." He said, "We'll come IC."

That's one thing about him, that agreement I had with him, that's the only problem I had with him. From then on, teams coming in here came IC. Of course, coming in from Chicago, we played a lot of teams out of Chicago. We played the Chicago Cardinals every year when Ernie Nevers was running that team, the coach of the team and a player. Ernie played with us down here some for a game or two. And they all came IC if they could. St. Louis came in here; they came IC.

I don't believe we played St. Louis in '29. At that time, they weren't the caliber of ball club that could draw for us. They finally built up and we played them later on. We played Louisville, I think, twice. Louisville was supposed to be a warm-up. We were going to play the (Chicago) Bears next Sunday and it rained so damn hard we'd take the ball and drive it down the length of the field on the old Hodges "sea of mud" and someone would fumble that damn thing on the ten yard line all day long. Then they'd have a little bitty ole guy that could put, and he'd kick the ball, and it would slide nearly sixty yards. Then, here we'd come again, and I came out at the beginning of the fourth quarter. They put a dry jersey on my and put me back into the game, with a couple of minutes left, and cleaned off the football. They were told one play, then throw a down and in pass. Boy, that ball was so heavy, they would never change balls during a game. And Big Hitte, later an assistant



coach at Wyoming, Arkansas, Tennessee under Vernon Wyle, threw the pass. Then we went the same route on the extra point. We beat them 7 to 0. God knows they were difficult. The ball was as heavy as a brick on account of all the water. Of course, we weren't but ten, twelve yards away. In those days, you didn't do any field-goal kicking, you drop-kicked the thing. We couldn't have drop-kicked that ball; nobody could have, and the goalposts were in mud. The infield was in mud because it was a skinned infield, sandy skinned infield, dirt . . . you'd get out in there in that mud. We took that end of the field.

The Bears beat us the first time 39 to 19.

(Date of game was 11-23-29.) It was a close ball game. The score was 20 to 19 at the half.

Mr. Freeman: That was when Red Grange played with them?

Mr. Cavette: Yea, Grange played with them, oh they had a good ballclub. And then we played them again in '34, after we entered the American League with Louisville and all of them. We played the Bears at Russwood (a baseball stadium). Their backfield was (Bronco) Nagurski, Jack Manders and Beattie Feathers, one of the greatest running backs that ever played at Tennessee, and they beat us that day . . . oh, it wasn't too bad that day, maybe 21 to 7. It's been so long.

Mr. Freeman: Did Clarence Saunders go to any games after he lost the team?

Mr. Cavette: I don't know. After we got away from . . . he went broke and got out of the business. He came back with the



Keedoozle. It took him two or three years to get that thing going. Consequently, I didn't see much of Mr. Saunders later on. In fact, the last time I saw him alive was in '32, when I told him I was going up to Chicago.

And I didn't see much of Mr. Saunders. But, had he not gone broke, we would have gone to the NFL. That was his objective.

Mr. Freeman: He wanted to go to the NFL?

Mr. Cavette: Yes. It was what he was working for.

Mr. Freeman: That's too bad.

Mr. Cavette: They had teams up there (with) cities that weren't too big (in population).

Mr. Freeman: Well, Green Bay is not a very big team.

Mr. Cavette: No, and we had another not too far from Chicago. We played them, and they had a real fine running back from Iowa, that team. One reason I remember, we was running. I was running down (the field) on a punt, and he (the Iowa Runner) was kind of a dirty sucker. He hit me with his fist right in the balls. I had to come out of the game. But he beat us. I had a big fullback from Ole Miss who could run fast. This big guy was fast, his name was Cowboy Woodruff. He broke through late in the ball game and ran into him and knocked him down. He knocked Woodruff down, too. If he had run around him, he could have gone all the way for a touchdown, and we would have won the game. Providence!

Mr. Freeman: Providence, Rhode Island?

Mr. Cavette: Yes. If Cowboy had played football and forgot about what he did to me, we would have won the game.





Mr. Freeman: I see.

Mr. Cavette: We'd have scored!

Mr. Freeman: You met George Halas, owner of the Chicago Bears?

Mr. Cavette: Yes, he'd have some big people on his team. Most players were small. I only weighed 168 pounds. Most teams ran the Notre Dame box. He ran the "I," the single wing team. Of course, they didn't hand off the ball, they pitched it. The middle man, the fullback, was as far away from the other team as he could spread his arms. They ran it straight, then pitched it. Even if they went over the top of the line, they'd pitch it.

Mr. Freeman That's something, that we had a pro football team then, and people don't know about it.

Mr. Cavette: Yes. The young people can't realize it. But I see people all the time who are sixty years old, or older, who tell me, "I went to the games. My dad took me all the time." The guys born in the 30's and 40's don't know about it.

Mr. Freeman: Why did they stop having a football team here?

Mr. Cavette: Well, they couldn't get a sponsor for the team because this was in the Depression days. We had a Depression until 1937, then we had another one, a little one, in '37. A lot of people were out of work. I don't remember what we charged for tickets, a dollar or two. I have no idea.



Mr. Freeman:           You never had to pay for the games.

Mr. Cavette:           No, I played for them as long as they were here. We started in '27.

Mr. Freeman:           You started right after high school?

Mr. Cavette:           I didn't go to college. I graduated high school in 1926 and started (playing) in 1927. I was 22 years old.

Mr. Freeman:           Was Lee Saunders a good ball player?

Mr. Cavette:           Well, he played high school football. He was a good little football player, but he wasn't good enough to play on the college level. He broke his leg right here (he points to his shin bone) and I forgot how he done it. That was the end of him. But he mingled in and mixed real good with the other team members. They were good boys . . . about like I did. I came up with Lee right here in high school.

Mr. Freeman:           Where did he go to high school?

Mr. Cavette:           Well, he went to Fort . . . a private high school, then he went to MUS.













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